

CLAIMS

1. A system for managing lease of arbitrary information contents to be distributed from an information lease service provider to a user, the system comprising:

an information lease management apparatus for adding utilization condition information concerning lease of information contents to information contents, and processing the information so as to be distributed to the user;

an information processing apparatus for receiving information contents with utilization condition information distributed from the information lease management apparatus; and

communication means for connecting the information lease management apparatus and information processing apparatus, characterized in that the information processing apparatus is managed so as to automatically erasing the received information contents by using communication means based on the utilization condition information.

2. An information lease management system as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that an automatically erasable recording medium with its time limit storage function, the recording medium storing said information contents, is connected to said information processing apparatus, and when

a lease period has expired, the rented information contents are automatically erased based on utilization condition information.

3. An information lease management system as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that said recording medium has a data erasure mechanism for automatically erasing said information contents when the recording medium is removed from said information processing apparatus.

4. An information lease management system as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that a contract concerning lease of said information contents is made between said information lease service provider and a user.

5. An information lease management system as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that Internet, telephone lines, satellite communication line or lease communication lines are used as said communication means.

6. An apparatus for managing lease of information contents distributed from an information lease service provider to a user, the apparatus characterized by comprising:
data processing means for adding utilization condition information concerning information lease to a user to

information contents; and

transmission and reception means for distributing to a user the information contents having the utilization condition information added thereto by the data processing means or receiving response information from the user.

7. An information lease management apparatus as claimed in claim 6, characterized in that there is provided a database storing information contents to be leased to said user.
8. An information lease management apparatus as claimed in claim 6, characterized in that at least menu screen information describing a title of information contents stored in said database is provided to a user.
9. An information lease management apparatus as claimed in claim 6, characterized in that at least a title of said information contents, lease charge and lease period, and a list of said users are integrally managed.
10. An information lease management apparatus as claimed in claim 6, characterized in that, in the case where an upper limit of an amount of money predetermined in accordance with a contract is provided, said data processing

means obtains a cumulative utilization charge in which lease charges of said information contents are cumulated;

compares said upper limit of an amount of money and said cumulative utilization charge with each other; and

present lease rejection of said information contents or a change of said upper limit of an amount of money in the case where said cumulative utilization charge exceeds said upper limit of amount of money.

11. An apparatus for receiving information contents leased from an information lease service provider to a user, said apparatus characterized by comprising:

transmission and reception means for receiving information contents having added thereto utilization condition information concerning information lease to the user;

data processing means for processing information contents received by the transmission and reception means; and

a recording medium connectable to the data processing means in order to store information contents, wherein the data processing means is provided so as to automatically erase information contents stored in a recording medium based on the utilization condition information.

12. An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that said recording medium comprises a data erasure mechanism for, when the recording medium is removed from said data processing means, automatically erasing information contents stored in said storage means.

13. An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that said data erasure mechanism comprises:

detection means for detecting the fact that the recording medium is removed from said data processing means; and

control means for controlling disconnection of power supply to storage means based on removal detection information caused by said detection means.

14. An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that, when power supply to said recording medium is disconnected, there is provided a lock mechanism for fixing the recording means to said data processing means.

15. An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that there is provided display means

for displaying index information concerning said information contents.

16. An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 15, characterized in that at least a menu screen describing a title of said information contents is displayed on said display means.

17. An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 16, characterized in that arbitrary information contents selected from said menu screen are distributed to said storage medium.

18. An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that there is provided operation means operated so as to input setting information concerning lease of said information contents.

19. An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that an upper limit of an amount of utilization charge of the information contents is set with respect to lease of said information contents.

20. An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that said utilization condition

information contains a control program for selecting whether or not a lease period of said information contents is extended.

21. An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that, in the case where age limitation is set with respect to lease of said information contents, said utilization condition information contains a control program for inputting a predetermined user registered password number.

22. An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that, in the case where a lease period of said information contents is arbitrarily set, said utilization condition information contains a control program for inputting a lease period of said information contents.

23. A method of managing lease of information contents distributed from an information lease service provider to a user by using communication means, said method is characterized by comprising the steps of:

making a contract concerning lease of information contents in advance between the information lease service provider and the user;

adding utilization condition information to information contents to be distributed to the user based on the

contrast on one hand, receiving information contents having utilization condition information added thereto on the other hand; and

storing the received information contents in a recording medium with its automatically erasable time limit storage function; and

automatically erasing the information contents stored in the recording medium based on the utilization condition information.

24. An information lease management method as claimed in claim 23, characterized in that Internet or communication lines such as telephone line or satellite communication lines are used.

25. An information lease management method as claimed in claim 23, characterized in that, in the case where said recording medium is attached to a data processing unit, when said storage medium is removed from said data processing unit, information contents contained in said recording medium is automatically erased.

26. An information lease management method as claimed in claim 23, characterized in that a user is presented with index information concerning a plurality of information

contents to be leased to said user.

27. An information lease management method as claimed in claim 26, characterized in that at least a menu screen describing a title of said information contents is displayed.

28. An information lease management method as claimed in claim 27, characterized in that arbitrary information contents selected from said menu screen is distributed.

29. An information lease management method as claimed in claim 23, characterized in that a lease period of said information contents are arbitrarily input with respect to a lease contract of said information contents.

30. An information lease management method as claimed in claim 23, characterized in that an upper limit of an amount of money for utilization charge of said information contents is set with respect to a lease contract of said information contents.

31. An information lease management method as claimed in claim 30, characterized by comprising the steps of:

in the case where an upper limit of an amount of money is set with respect to a lease of said information

contents, obtaining a cumulative utilization charge in which at least lease charges of said information contents are cumulated;

comparing said upper limit of an amount of money with said cumulative utilization charge; and

in the case where said cumulative utilization charge exceeds said upper limit of an amount of money, presenting lease rejection of said information contents or a change of said upper limit of an amount of money.

32. An information lease management method as claimed in claim 23, characterized in that, in the case where age limitation is set with respect to lease of said information contents, a predetermined, user registered password number is input.

33. An information lease management method as claimed in claim 23, characterized in that, when a lease period of said information contents has expired, it is selected whether or not the lease period of said information contents is extended.

34. An information lease management method as claimed in claim 23, characterized in that at least a title of said information contents, lease charge and lease period, and a list of said users are integrally managed.

35. A recording medium for recording information contents with utilization condition information leased from an information lease service provider to a user, characterized in that, when a predetermined lease period has expired, information contents stored in the recording medium is automatically erased based on said utilization condition information.

36. A recording medium as claimed in claim 35, characterized in that, in the case where said recording medium is attached to data processing means, when the recording medium is removed from said data processing means, there is provided a data erasure mechanism for automatically erasing information contents stored in the recording medium.

37. A recording medium as claimed in claim 35, characterized in that, said data erasure mechanism comprises:

detection means for detecting the fact that the recording medium is removed from said data processing means; and

control means for controlling disconnection of power supply to storage means based on removal detection information caused by said detection means.

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